IN THE CLAIMS

1.   (Currently Amended)   A lending library apparatus comprising:

an electronic asset lending library database containing a plurality of user accounts and at least one license ~~for an~~ corresponding to an electronic asset ~~assigned by a user having one of the plurality of user accounts~~ provided to the database;

an account manager to maintain the user accounts;

an asset manager to maintain each license ~~for an electronic asset assigned by a user having one of the plurality of user accounts~~, wherein each license includes one or more license restrictions set by the user that assigned the electronic asset; ~~and~~

a loan manager to control the assignment of ~~the~~ each license ~~for the electronic asset~~ to another user having another one of the plurality of user accounts according to the license restrictions set by the user that assigned the electronic asset; and

a license processor to find user accounts having electronic assets with an expired license, to request a user having an expired license to return or remove any electronic assets corresponding to the expired license, and to maintain a catalog of unassigned licenses for electronic assets.

2.   (Previously Presented)   The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a notification manager to notify an assignee of the license for the electronic asset when the loan manager approves an assignment to the assignee of the license for the electronic asset.

3.   (Previously Presented)   The apparatus of claim 1, wherein:

the account manager further maintains a subset of the plurality of user accounts as members of a one of a plurality of communities;

the asset manager further maintains ownership of the license by one of the communities; and

the loan manager restricts the assignment of the license for the electronic asset to an assignee having a user account in the community having ownership of the license.

4.   (Previously Presented)   The apparatus of claim 1, wherein:

the account manager further maintains a subset of the plurality of user accounts as members of a one of a plurality of access control lists;

the asset manager further maintains an association between the access control list and the electronic asset; and

the loan manager restricts the assignment of the license for the electronic asset to a-an assignee having a user account in an access control list associated with the electronic asset.

5.   (Previously Presented)   The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the access control list restriction is overridden in response to a request by an assignee not having a user account in the access control list associated with the electronic asset.

6.   (Cancelled)

7.   (Previously Presented)   The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the assignee notification is an electronic message addressed to the assignee containing written instructions for installing the electronic asset.

8.   (Previously Presented)   The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the notification is communicated over a communications network.

9.   (Original)   The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the communications network is the Internet.

10.   (Previously Presented)   The apparatus of claim 2, further comprising:

an electronic distribution mechanism to install the electronic asset on the assignee's computer in response to the approval of an assignment of a license corresponding to the electronic asset.

11.   (Original)   The apparatus of claim 3, wherein a community is one of a plurality of types of intra-organizational entities, including a project team, department, or division.

12.   (Currently Amended)   An article of manufacture comprising:

an electronically accessible medium providing instructions that, when executed by an apparatus, cause the apparatus to manage a plurality of user accounts;

manage at least one license ~~for~~ corresponding to an electronic asset ~~assigned~~ provided by

a user having one of the plurality of user accounts, the license including one or more license

restrictions set by the user ~~that assigned the electronic asset~~;

control the assignment of the at least one license ~~for the electronic asset~~ to another user

having another one of the plurality of user accounts according to the license restrictions ~~set by~~

~~the user that assigned the electronic asset~~; ~~and~~

notify the assignee when an assignment to the assignee of the license for the electronic

asset is approved;

find user accounts having electronic assets with an expired license;

request a user having an expired license to return or remove any electronic assets

corresponding to the expired license; and

maintain a catalog of unassigned licenses for electronic assets.

13.   (Original)   The article of manufacture of claim 12, wherein the electronically accessible

medium providing instructions that, when executed by the apparatus, cause the apparatus to

manage the plurality of user accounts includes instructions to cause the apparatus to associate

each user account with a one of a plurality of communities;

to manage the license includes instructions to cause the apparatus to associate the license

with a one of the plurality of communities and assign the license to one of the plurality of user

accounts; and

control the assignment of the at least one license further includes instructions to cause the

apparatus to restrict the assignment of the license to eligible assignees, wherein an eligible

assignee is associated with the same community as the license.

14. (Previously Presented) The article of manufacture of claim 13 wherein the electronically accessible medium providing instructions that, when executed by an apparatus, further cause the apparatus to display the electronic asset; and

reassign the license of the electronic asset to another one of the plurality of user accounts in response to a selection of the electronic asset from the display by an assignee using the another one of the plurality of user accounts.

15. (Previously Presented) The article of manufacture of claim 14 wherein the electronically accessible medium providing instructions that, when executed by the apparatus, cause the apparatus manage the plurality of user accounts includes instructions that cause the apparatus to add or delete each user account into at least one of a plurality of access control lists;

manage the license includes instructions that cause the apparatus to associate the electronic asset with a one of the plurality of access control lists; and

control the assignment of the at least one license further includes instructions that cause the apparatus to restrict the assignement of a license to an assignee listed on the access control list to which the electronic asset is assigned.

16. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

managing a plurality of user accounts;

managing licenses for a plurality of electronic assets;

receiving a request from a user of one of the plurality of user accounts to assign an electronic asset to another user of another of the plurality of user accounts;

generating a license and associated license restrictions for the electronic asset according

to the restrictions specified by the user requesting the assignment;

adding the license of the electronic asset to the plurality of licenses ~~managed electronic~~

~~assets; and~~

controlling the assignment of each license ~~for the plurality of electronic assets~~ to an

assignee having one of the plurality of user accounts according to the license restrictions

specified by the user ~~requesting the assignment~~ that assigned the electronic asset;

finding user accounts having electronic assets with an expired license; and

requesting a user having an expired license to return or remove any electronic assets

corresponding to the expired license.

17.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 16, wherein:

managing the plurality of user accounts includes associating each user account with a one

of a plurality of communities;

managing the licenses includes associating each license with one of the plurality of

communities and assigning each license to one of the plurality of user accounts; and

controlling further includes restricting the asssignment of licenses to an assignee who is

associated with the same community as the license.

18.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 17, wherein the one of a plurality of

communities is an organizational entity, including a division, department or team.

19.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 16, further comprising displaying the plurality of electronic assets.

20.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 19, further comprising receiving a selection of one of the plurality of electronic assets from the display by an assignee using one of the plurality of user accounts, approving an assignment of the electronic asset to the assignee based on the license restrictions associated with the electronic asset, and reassigning the license for the electronic asset to the assignee's user account.

21.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 16, wherein:

managing the plurality of user accounts includes adding or deleting each user account into at least one of a plurality of access control lists;

managing the license includes associating the electronic asset with a one of the plurality of access control lists; and

controlling further includes restricting the assignment of a license to an assignee listed on the access control list to which the electronic asset is assigned.

22.   (Currently Amended)   A computer implemented method comprising:

managing a plurality of user accounts;

generating a license and associated license restrictions for an electronic asset on a lending library server, wherein the electronic asset is ~~assigned~~ provided by a user having one of the plurality of user accounts and the license restrictions are set by the user that ~~assigned~~ provided the electronic asset;

displaying to an assignee having another one of the plurality of user accounts the license and associated license restrictions on a lending library client;

receiving an assignee's selection for the license and transferring the license to the assignee if eligible in accordance with the associated license restrictions; ~~and~~

transmitting to the assignee instructions for the installation of the electronic asset in compliance with the transferred license on the lending library client;

finding user accounts having electronic assets with an expired license; and

requesting a user having an expired license to return or remove any electronic assets corresponding to the expired license.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the lending library server and the lending library client are connected to a communications network.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22, wherein the associated license restrictions require the assignee to belong to a community, the community being the same community to which the electronic asset belongs.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the associated license restrictions further require the assignee to be listed on an access control list associated with the electronic asset.

26. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein the community is an organizational entity, including a division, department or team.

27.   (Previously Presented)   The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the electronic asset lending library database resides on a removable data storage device.

28.   (Previously Presented)   The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the data storage device is a CD-ROM or a DVD-ROM.